THE NEW
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## UAE BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO SWITCH TO 4 ½-DAY WORK WEEK

**The new work week, aimed at improving employees' productivity as well as work-life balance, will kick off from January 1, 2022**

### FLEXI-HOURS, WORK-FROM-HOME OPTIONS

According to the new schedule, the work timings from Monday to Thursday would be from 7.30 am to 3.30 pm, followed by a half day on Friday from 7.30 am to 12.00 pm. Saturdays and Sundays are full-day holidays under the new rule. Further, employees would be offered flexible working hours and work-from-home options on Friday, a government release said

### MOVE TO ALIGN WITH GLOBAL MARKETS

- The new system will first be implemented in govt institutions, schools and colleges. Private entities are expected to follow suit
- The change is expected to align the Emirates with global markets
- The Emirati governments of Dubai and Abu Dhabi have already announced the four-and-a-half day workweek

EIGHT
WORKING HOURS PER DAY FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY. ON FRIDAY, IT'S 4 ½ HOURS

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If anyone asks 'OTP' - do not respond

A meeting of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha at Singhu border in New Delhi on Tuesday | PTI

# Wary SKM wants proposal rework on setting up MSP panel, axing cases

HARPREET SAJWA @Chandigarh

A panel set up by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farm unions, on Tuesday sought clarifications and amendments on a set of draft proposals the Union home ministry sent to it in writing to address their demands and facilitate ending their year-long protest. The panel hopes to discuss the ministry's response on Wednesday to take a call.

While the draft said a committee comprising representatives from the Central and state governments, experts and representatives of SKM and other farmer outfits will be formed to look into the demand for a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism, the SKM does not want other farmer unions in it. The SKM is unwilling to allow space to outfits that were not part of the agitation, said senior leader Balbir Singh Rajewal.

Second, the draft says all criminal cases against farmers will be withdrawn after the agitation ends. "We will not accept it. The government should immediately begin the procedure to withdraw cases in a time-bound manner. The Punjab government has already announced its decision to drop the cases," Rajewal said.

Third, the draft has in principle agreed to give compensation to farmers who died during the course of the agitation. "Our count of the toll is 700. The Centre can follow the Punjab model, which involves ₹5 lakh compensation and a government job to the next of kin," said Ashok Dhawale, another senior SKM leader.

Fourth, on the proposed electricity amendment bill, the Centre says it will bring a bill in Parliament after due diligence and talks with all stakeholders, but the matter is already on the winter session's legislative agenda. "During talks held earlier with the SKM, the government had said it would not bring this bill in Parliament," pointed out Dhawale.

Fifth, on stubble burning, the Centre had assured that there will be no criminal liability on farmers. "But amendments in the Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act 2021 have made stubble burning punishable in Section 15. It should be amended," added Dhawale.

# Amid Covid worry, KPSC aspirants to write exams away from home

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

EVEN as there is a resurgence of Covid in different parts of the state, close to 60,000 aspirants who have applied for assistant engineers and junior engineer posts in the Public Works Department will have to travel 500 to 700 km from their hometowns to write the Karnataka Public Service Commission exams for two days on December 13 and 14. Most of the aspirants have been assigned examination centres far away from their hometowns.

This, KPSC officials said, is to avoid malpractice as aspirants will not have any local support. But the candidates are apprehensive that they have to travel long distances at a time when Covid cases are rising. Also, they have to spend a lot more on travel and stay as the exams are on two days. The candidates came to know about their examination centres only on Monday with exams just a week away.

Shashidhar (name changed) from Kalaburagi, has to come all the way to Bengaluru to write the exam at a centre in Vijayanagar. "I wrote the exams in 2019, but they were scrapped because of legal reasons. I downloaded my hall ticket on Monday night and it mentioned my centre as Bengaluru. I cannot miss the exams as I have been preparing for the last three years. Travelling all the way from Kalaburagi to Bengaluru and staying at a hotel or a room adds to my expense," he said.

Priya (name changed), from Hassan has been assigned a centre at Yelahanka. She has to travel five hours to reach Bengaluru.

The previous, scrapped exams were held in 2019 during the previous JDS-Congress coalition government. The applications were called for in March to fill 870 engineer posts -- 570 assistant engineers and 300 junior engineers. The exams were conducted in June 2019 and the BJP came to power in July. P4

### Number of genome sequencing labs to go up

The state government is planning to increase the number of laboratories across the state to conduct genome sequencing. CM Basavaraj Bommai said on Tuesday, "To set up labs with the testing facility for genome sequencing, we need experts to handle testing and also machines." P4

Swab samples being collected during random testing in Bengaluru on Tuesday

### Case against hotel, lab under scanner

Police and health officials filed a case against Shangri La, the five-star hotel where the South African traveller was quarantined, and from where he left the city after furnishing a Covid-negative report. They are also checking the details of SRL Lab, which issued the negative test reports to the South African. A notice was also slapped on the sample collection and testing centre. P3

| NATIONWIDE | DEC 06 | DEC 07 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 8,306 | 6,822 |
| Recoveries | 8,834 | 10,004 |
| Deaths | 211 | 220 |

| KARNATAKA | DEC 06 | DEC 07 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 301 | 299 |
| Recoveries | 359 | 260 |
| Deaths | 7 | 6 |

TAKE YOUR SHOT
Dec 06 71,09,699 doses
Dec 07 64,37,538 doses
TOTAL DOSES DELIVERED

EXPRESS READ

### High-end car hits 3 vehicles, one dies

Bengaluru: A road rage incident involving a 40-year-old businessman and two bikers on 80-feet Road in Indiranagar and his subsequent bid to escape caused a serial crash, killing a 36-year-old valet of a restaurant, injuring a woman in a cab and two drivers and damaging three vehicles. P5

## NASA

Indian-origin doctor among 10 chosen for Moon Mission

Born to Indian and Ukranian immigrants, US Air Force Lt Col Anil Menon will be part of future missions | P20

## SPICEJET TO APPEAL HC WINDING-UP ORDER

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai / New Delhi

A day after the Madras High Court ordered the winding up of SpiceJet over its failure to make payments to a Swiss maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) service provider, the private carrier said on Tuesday that it was planning to appeal.

SpiceJet owes around $24 million to Zurich-based SR Technics, with which it has a 10-year agreement to avail MRO service. On Monday, the single-judge bench of Justice R Subramanian allowed the petition by Credit Suisse AG, which had been assigned the right to receive payments due to SR Technics and ordered that the airline be wound up. The operation of the verdict was, however, stayed for three weeks following a plea by the airline on condition that SpiceJet deposit $5 million with the court in two weeks.

The court rejected the airline's contention that SR Technics did not possess DGCA's approval from 2009 to 2015, saying the airline had availed of the services.

SpiceJet said the Swiss firm made the "fraudulent misrepresentation" of having DGCA approval. This, the company said, is contrary to Indian and other applicable laws and therefore, makes the entire agreement infructuous. "Since the agreement falls and is void, Credit Suisse as an assignee does not and cannot have any claim against the Company," SpiceJet said.

> The company is examining the order and initiating appropriate remedial steps including preferring an appeal before the appellate jurisdiction within the timeframe allowed by the Madras High Court. The company believes it has a good case on merits and is hopeful of having a favourable outcome in the appeal — SpiceJet

## AADHAAR
FOR NEWBORNS

Has been made easy with the UIDAI accessing the birth certificate of a newborn directly from a state government portal. Karnataka becomes only the second state after Haryana to implement the system | P2

BREAKTHROUGH

## IISc researchers find a gas to suppress HIV

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

RESEARCHERS at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and their collaborators have identified a key role played by hydrogen sulphide (H2S) gas in suppressing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. They have discovered the direct effect of H2S reducing the rate at which the virus multiplies in HIV-infected human immune cells. The finding paves the way for developing a more comprehensive antiretroviral therapy against HIV.

The current combined antiretroviral therapy (cART) is not a cure for HIV. It can only suppress the virus. In some cases, cART is known to fail even when patients fully follow their drug regimen. Certain negative effects are also associated with it, like build-up of toxic molecules leading to 'oxidative stress' and loss of function in the mitochondria, the cell's powerhouse. CONTINUED ON: P7

## 1% Indians own 20% of national income

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE gap between the haves and have-nots in India widened further in 2021, according to the World Inequality Report 2022, released on Tuesday. Authored by Lucas Chancel, co-director of the World Inequality Lab, and coordinated by famed French economist Thomas Piketty, the report notes that the top 1% of India's population owns more than one-fifth of the total national income and the top 10% owns 57% . In contrast, the bottom half owns just 13%.

"India stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with affluent elite," said the report by the World Inequality Lab, which does work through evidence-based research on inequality worldwide.

According to the report, the average household wealth in India is ₹9,83,010, with the bottom 50% owning almost nothing as their average wealth is a paltry ₹66,280. The middle class is also relatively poor, with an average wealth of ₹7,23,930. At the same time, the top 10% of the population owns around ₹6,354,070, while it's a massive ₹32,449,360 for the top 1%.

The report notes that India's liberalisation policies have led to one of the most extreme increases in income and wealth inequality observed in the world. While the top one per cent has largely benefited from economic reforms, growth among low and the middle income groups has been relatively slow and poverty persists.

Gender inequalities are also very high in the country. The female labour income share is equal to 18%. This is significantly lower than the average in Asia, excluding China, at 21%.

### Billionaires' wealth soars

The share of global wealth held by billionaires registered a record surge during the pandemic. Around 2,750 billionaires own 3.5% of the world's wealth now, up from just 1% in 1995

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